in Islamabad from 2 to 3 December, 1998. Follow up action has now to be taken for the signing of the agreement by the two Governments. The bus service is expected to commence by the middle of January, 1999.

Indian/Pakistani Fishermen in Captivity

1318. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) details regarding number of Indian fishermen in the captivity of Pakistan and Pakistani fishermen in captivity of India;

(b) whether it has been agreed to free some of the fishermen during the meeting held between the officers of both the countries;

(c) if so, how many have been freed and whether such meetings will normalise the relations; and

(d) if so, when the next such meeting will take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (d) Following discussions during the meeting between Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan held in Islamabad from 15-18 October 1998, as part of the composite dialogue process, India and Pakistan conveyed to each other through diplomatic channels the details of fishermen to be released by either side.

A delegation of Indian fishermen and Boat Owners Association went to Karachi on 8 November, 1998 to facilitate the identification and repatriation of Indian fishermen. 190 Indian fishermen returned home on 23rd November 1998.

We have conveyed to Pakistan our decision to release 149 Pakistani fishermen in our custody and asked them to make necessary arrangements for their repatriation to Pakistan. Pakistan has informed us that a delegation of Pakistan Fishermen Association would be arriving in India on 7th December, 1998 to facilitate the return and repatriation of Pakistani fishermen.

It is our view that in future when fishermen/fishing vessels of one country inadvertently stray into the territorial waters of the other and are arrested, they should be immediately offered for release and, after completion of due procedures, repatriated.

We will continue to take up with Pakistan the release of the remaining Indian fishermen in their custody.

Bus Service between Delhi and Lahore

1319. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to run a bus service between Delhi-Lahore during December, 1998;

(b) if so, categories of buses to be provided, fare and modalities required for passenger to undergo the same at Delhi;

(c) whether to ensure safety of Indian passengers, Government propose to ensure registration of these passengers by officials of Indian High Commission in Pakistan on arrival at Lahore bus terminal;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether Government propsoe to introduce similar bus service from Hyderabad to some towns of Pakistan in near future; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (f) An agreement and a protocol, providing a framework and operational mechanism for a bus service between Delhi and Lahore, were initiated on 3rd December, 1998 by the leaders of the Indian and Pakistani delegations following discussions held between the two countries in Islamabad from 2 to 3 De-

cember, 1998. Follow up action has now to be taken for the signing of the agreement by the two Governments. The bus service is expected to comence by the middle of January, 1999.

The safety and security of the bus and passengers will be ensured by the respective governments in their territories.

There is no proposal to introduce a bus service between Hyderabad and towns in Pakistan.

Impact of withdrawal of Sanctions by USA

1320. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRA PILLAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the impact of the recent withdrawal of sanctions of India by United States in various sectors; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the approach of United State is discriminatory per se and also its consequences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) In partial exercise of waiver authority given by the US Congress, US Government on November 7, 1998 announced lifting of some economic restrictive measures against India. These relate to programmes of three US institutions namely the EXIM Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Trade Development Authority (TDA) in addition to lifting restrictions on Commercial US Banks and International Military Education & Training Programme (IMET).

The removal of these restrictions will improve the climate for mutually beneficial business interactions and improve the prospects of Indian and US companies making use of these programmes to raise financing from the US for industrial and infrastructural projects.

(b) While announcing lifting of the same restrictions for Pakistan, the US also announced lifting of restrictions on lending from the multilateral development Banks in the context of an IMF led emergency package for the Pakistan economy.

India has supported economic assistance to Pakistan and has consistently voted in the World Bank and other multilateral forums in favour of such assistance. India, however, does not agree with selective and discriminatory approach in this regard. India has always maintained that unilateral and restrictive economic meausres are unjustified and counter productive and should be lifted.

Persons of Indian Origin in Various Countries

1321. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the number of persons of Indian-origin living in various countries, country-wise and profession-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): A statement detailing the approximate number of Indian citizens living in various countries is placed on the Table of the House (*See* below). No record has so far been maintained of the profession-wise break-up of Indians living abroad. Computer software has however very recently been developed which would enable the Indian diplomatic Missions and Posts abroad in future to collect and maintain a comprehensive database, including information on profession, of both Indian citizens resident abroad as well of those foreign nationals of Indian origin wishing to register their interest with Government.